THE SHADOW KNOWS

ASTRO SOUNDS / B–SIDE / DONUT PRODUCTIONS / MARLBORO MUSIC /
PHILIP SAMARTZIS / STEVEN HARRIS / TRANSITION / TONY LAWRENCE /

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The Shadow Knows is a music fanzine published twice each year. This is the second issue and is available both online and as a limited print run, which you are currently holding.

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Intro.....

Weclome to our second issue. The response to the first was great, and it was especially exciting to be sending copies all over the world. This issue is even bigger, and we'll have more online in the coming months too, so don't forget to check the website.

Who Is Tony Lawrence - If you've watched *Summer of Soul* then you've seen Tony in his role as MC of the Harlem Cultural Festival. Not much is known about the man, but we've put together what we could find.

B-side - The French rapper heard on a handful of rap hits by Fab Five Freddy and Afrika Bambaataa was actually an American named Ann Marie Boyle, aka B-Side. We spoke to her about her early music career.

Philip Samartzis - This Australian sound artist has visited Antarctica multiple times to record the continent's extreme weather. We found out more.

Astro Sounds - Australia's newest hip hop record label started putting instrumental beats on wax this year. We asked what it's like to set up a record label during a pandemic.

Groovin' To The Max : Marlboro Music - In the 1990s Philip Morris was running a record label using the iconography of their popular Marlboro cigarette brand. The label collaborated with UK based Mo' Wax on several releases, and these days many people refuse to believe it was even real. We talked to the people who were there.

Donut Productions - Marc Lariviere was part of Donut Productions, who released a rare album with Marlboro Music. He spoke to us about his time with the group, and what he's been up to since.

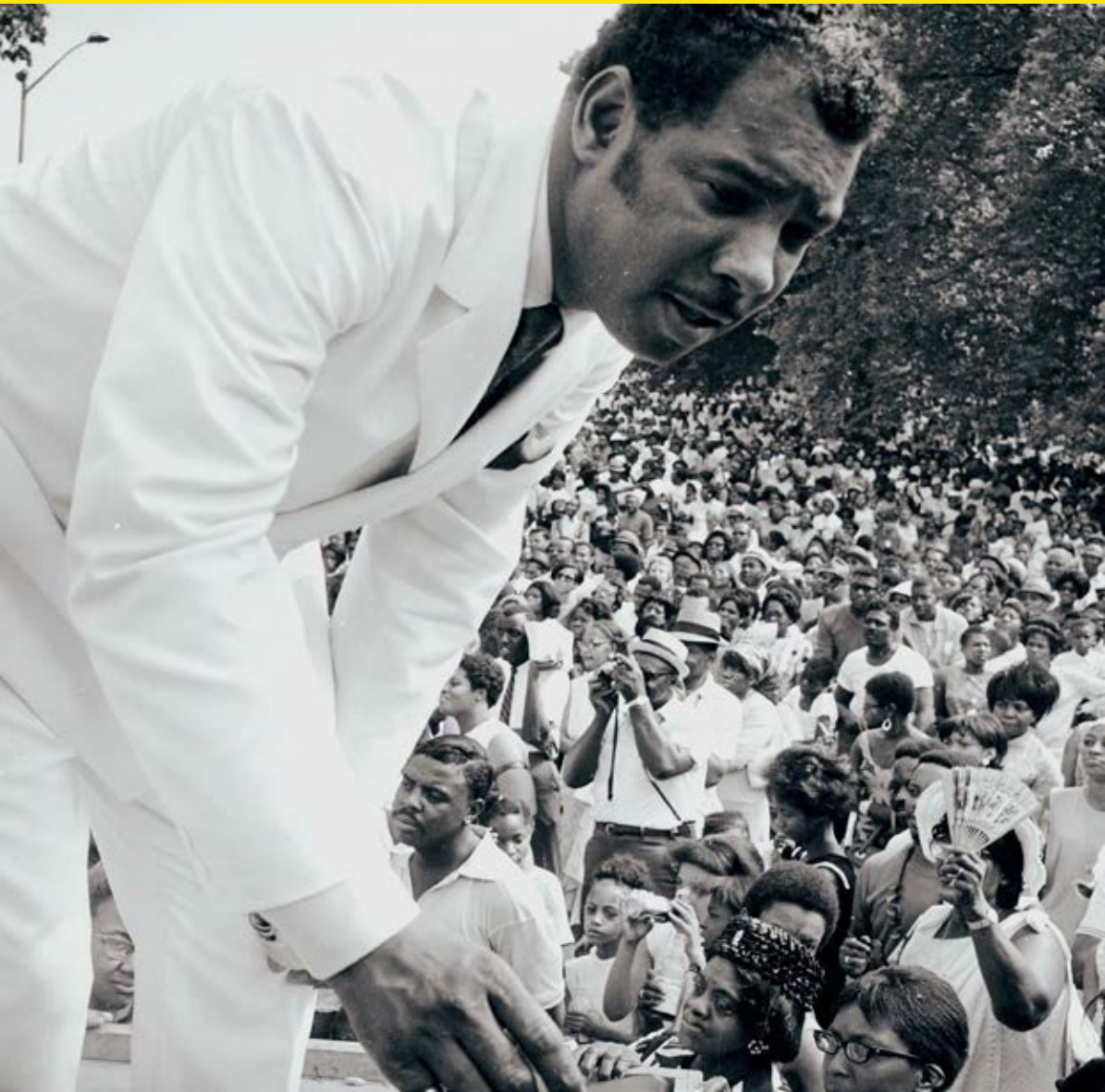
Steven Harris - Based in Adelaide, Steven has released two synth heavy solo albums on cassette following his work with Melbourne band NUN. We spoke about his new album, and the gear he uses to make his music.

Jazz In Transition - Transition Records released less than 20 albums, but they included early John Coltrane and Sun Ra, with founder Tom Wilson going on to work with Bob Dylan, The Velvet Underground, and more.

New Zealand's Lathe Record Cutting Master - Peter King has become a legend in the lathe record community for his years of service.

Reviews - There's been stacks of great albums out this year and we've picked some of our favourites we were listening to while putting together this issue. We also review books on Serge Gainsbourg, Nico, and women in rap.

Who Is Tony Lawrence?



Tony Lawrence was a singer from the West Indies who made a name for himself in 1960s New York as the man responsible for The Harlem Cultural Festival.

The 1969 Festival has recently found itself back in the spotlight thanks to the documentary film *Summer of Soul* which is streaming and showing in select cinemas around the world. But before 1969, Lawrence had released a handful of 7" singles, toured the world, and become celebrated for his work around the Harlem community.

Still, Tony Lawrence remains a mystery for the most part, with much remaining unknown about his life.

Born around 1936 in Saint Kitts, Tony Lawrence's family moved when he was two years old and settled in Portsmouth, Virginia. At Crestwood high school, Lawrence sang with his school band, and won an athletic scholarship to Morgan State College in Baltimore, where he was said to be popular for his "good looks and pleasant singing voice".

After college, Lawrence spent two and a half years with the US Army's Special Services, and refined his singing voice providing entertainment for the troops. Upon leaving the army in 1955 he won a scholarship to the American Theater Wing where he appeared in Shakespearean roles, and graduated with honours in 1960, telling *The Indianapolis Recorder* that his acting experience "was of tremendous value to me because it helped me properly dramatize a song when I sing."

Following appearances in several Broadway and off-Broadway shows, Lawrence began receiving press in 1961, when the 26-year-old released *You Got To Show Me* on Silver Bid. The song made the US Hot 100 Bubbling Under chart, reaching #114, and is the only time Tony Lawrence appeared in a Billboard chart.

But this wasn't his debut, as Lawrence had already released *Put De Money Where De Mouth Is* on Mala in 1959, before it was picked up and re-released by Jude the following year. Three earlier releases have also been mentioned in the press, but remain largely unknown. In October 1956 it was reported Lawrence made his first recording for Beech Records, though a title was not given. Then in 1957 he was said to have recorded *I'm Much Too Young* and *St. Louis Blues*, while in 1958 his recording *Confessin'* was said to be making the DJ and jukebox rounds.

Similarly an album titled *The Continental Album* was advertised as being released June 1, 1961, but much like his early singles, it remains a mystery to collectors outside of being mentioned in press clippings.

Dubbed the "continental dreamboat", in the early 1960s Lawrence was noted for his stylish clothing and good looks, which lead to him getting mobbed by fans during his singing appearances.

Jude Records

TONY LAWRENCE

"The Continental Dreamboat"

VERSATILE, MAGNETIC SINGER

***Just Concluded* TWIN COACHES**

"Box office . . . blockbuster"
VARIETY

Management	Press Rep.:
DEBBIE MILLER	QUEEN ARTIST CORP.
17 West 60th St. N.Y.C.	1697 Broadway, N.Y.C.
JU 2-8160	CI 6-2398

Pictured: An advertisement from *Variety*, May 1961

Touring the country, Lawrence made appearances on TV programs such as *The Joe Franklin Show, Dick Clark Show,* and *The Ed Sullivan Show*, before he secured his own daily 15-minute program, to air in New York during the fall of 1962.

That year he got another big break when Princess Margaret personally picked Tony Lawrence to sing at several parties in Jamaica, celebrating the country gaining their independence. His performances were so well received Lawrence not only was invited back to Jamaica, but was also booked to perform in Trinidad as part of their own independence celebrations.

Lawrence was a rising star, and he had his sights set on the movies. Looking back in 1969 he said, "My best part was in *The Pawnbroker* when I played a black cop and had a whole scene written around me." But although he made uncredited appearances in *Dr No* (1962), *The Pawnbroker* (1964), and *The Detective* (unknown), and was "hard at work on a new movie called *Labrinthia*" in 1963, by the late 1960s these remained his only known credits.

Instead, Tony Lawrence began to make a name for himself around Harlem for helping his community, and through his work as director of the Christ Community Church Recreation Center, and youth director for the JFK Youth Foundation in New York City, Lawrence led fundraising projects in support of new playgrounds around Harlem.

He told *The Pittsburgh Courier* in 1964, "The welfare of the children in Harlem, not only lies in the hands of their parents but also in the hands of the merchants of Harlem, who take out millions of dollars each year and never contribute anything to the welfare of that section. I'm appealing to [them]…to support me in this campaign."

Thanks to his efforts, the church was able to purchase city-owned vacant lots which were converted into small parks for the community, using money raised from concerts and events hosted by Lawrence. The opening of each park also saw block party events in celebration, and *The New York Times* were among the press to commend Lawrence for his work.

In 1966 Tony Lawrence held a series of summer block parties across three of the new parks he had helped open. Lawrence performed at several of the shows himself, which included a calypso carnival, gospel and folk concert, and a Latin American and Boogaloo party. There was no stage, as Lawrence later recalled, “The piano and the musicians were on the sidewalk. I didn’t know if it would work.”

It worked, and Lawrence repeated the feat the following year in May before he ran a new series of events in July which he called The Harlem Cultural Festival.

Inspired by his previous block parties, Tony Lawrence teamed with the New York City Department of Parks and the Park Association of New York City to present The 1967 Harlem Cultural Festival, with nine events held across Harlem, including in Morningside Park and Mt. Morris Park.

The free events were open to everyone, and included a Harlem Hollywood Night, boxing demonstrations, a fashion show, go-kart grand prix, the first Miss Harlem contest, and concerts featuring soul, gospel, calypso, and Puerto Rican music. “The Festival is a showcase for Harlem, but talent and audience will come from all over New York, all over the Americas, and all over the world”, Lawrence said at the time.

In 1968 the festival returned bigger than before, and for the first time was recorded. Lawrence hired Harold “Hal” Tulchin to film the concerts, which were broadcast in colour as a series of five one-hour specials on New York’s WNEW-TV. The footage was later donated to New York’s Museum of Broadcasting.

That year’s festival featured performances from Count Basie, Herbie Mann, Mahalia Jackson, The Olatunji African Drummers and Dancers, and the Tito Puente Band, and Lawrence took his own Soul Brothers Band on a tour around New York, with free shows in Coney Island, Manhattan, Bronx, and Queens held to promote the main event.

During the year Lawrence split his time between performing in the fall and winter, and working out of an office in the Parks Department. From there in March each year he would begin planning the festival and received a stipend from the Department for any expenses, explaining, “I do all right during the year [and] I don’t have to hustle off the festival or the community.”

As he began to plan the festival for 1969, a major partner was brought in, with Major Foods’ Maxwell House Coffee agreeing to sponsor the entire festival which was held over six Sundays. Olatunji and Mahalia Jackson returned, as did Hal Tulchin who once again filmed the festival for Lawrence.

The documentary film *Summer of Soul (...or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)* features footage from the 1969 festival, but while the film’s title would have you believe the show was not televised, it actually was.

Two programs hosted by Tony Lawrence aired with footage from the shows, with CBS premiering a one-hour special on July 28, 1969 featuring The Fifth Dimension, The Chambers Brothers, and Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln. The ad breaks also featured performers from the festival, with Tony Lawrence, Olatunji, Max Roach, and Abbey Lincoln in commercials for Maxwell House

Coffee. It was said to be the first time in US TV history an hour-long network TV special had featured four commercials with only black talent.

A second hour-long special followed on September 16 on ABC. Recorded during the festival's gospel show, it featured Mahalia Jackson, The Staple Singers, and Reverend Jesse Jackson. A further five specials were announced as forthcoming, and NBC snapped up the rights to the next concert, The Tony Lawrence Love Festival. Filmed in Newark, New Jersey on October 5, the free concert was recorded by Hal Tulchin and aired nationally on November 14, 1969.

1969 also saw the final known music release from Tony Lawrence, with a single titled *Harlem Cultural Festival* released on Lo Lo Records to promote that year's festival. It's a very funky instrumental, which features audiences cheering as a guitarist goes wild soloing alongside a piano riff. It's like nothing else from Tony Lawrence's discography, and while the price to own the single has skyrocketed since *Summer of Soul* came out, the song was also included on a 2001 compilation released in Australia titled *Funkaphonix, Vol. 5: Raw & Uncut Funk 1968-1975*.

Two further releases were announced, but much like his pre-60s singles, no mention of these exists outside of the music press from the time. First, an advertisement for 1969s ABC TV special mentions "Tony Lawrence's newest recording: "*Love Power*" and *The Harlem Festival Theme Song* on Uganda Records". Then another advertisement in 1970 mentions Tony Lawrence's *Harlem Cultural Festival TV Record Album*, but gives no further details. It's unclear what this was exactly, though it was likely a compilation of songs from the 1969 festival which had appeared in one of the TV specials.

For Lawrence, he not only wanted to put on a good show, but to also help local communities, and ahead of the festival in 1969 he explained his ethos to New York's *Daily News*. "If we make any extra money from TV and the sponsors, I'm talking to a lawyer about creating a trust without any overhead so we can feed the kids breakfast and maybe supper in the winters. A lot of their mothers work. Many people helped me and prayed with me to make this possible. It isn't going to get commercial."

But following 1969s festival, Lawrence noticed discrepancies in the festival's financial accounts, and he spent the next two years accusing various parties of ripping him off. This included his business partner Jerrold Kusnick, and the shows sponsors Major Foods, who Lawrence accused of trying to kill him with a car bomb. He also accused Hal Tulchin of stealing the video recordings which had been made of Lawrence's festivals, with Lawrence claiming he alone owned the tapes, which were being withheld from him by Tulchin.

Ahead of the 1970 Harlem Cultural Festival, Lawrence announced neither Tulchin nor Kusnick would be working with him, and that his own company Uganda Productions would oversee the recording of future concerts. But the 1970 festival finished after only one day, after money ran out and the remaining four planned concerts were cancelled.

There had been momentum building from 1967 through to 1970, but when the Harlem Cultural Festival returned in 1972 it was barely mentioned by the usual publications who had supported Lawrence in previous years. Perhaps his earlier accusations of corruption had burnt some bridges, but the Parks Department still believed in him, and the Harlem Cultural Festival returned to Mt.

Pictured: Tony Lawrence at The Harlem Cultural Festival (1969)

Morris Park again in 1973 and 1974.

Unfortunately, the festival received hardly any press at all outside of their announcements in local New York newspapers, and post-1974 Tony Lawrence's name stopped appearing in the press at all. That is, until now.

This year, there has understandably been renewed interest in Tony Lawrence thanks to the release of *Summer of Soul*, which used footage of 1969's festival. Notably the footage had remained in the possession of Harold Tulchin, who said he had long hoped to see it made into a film.

In the early 2000s he licensed the footage to Joe Lauro at New York's Historic Films Archives who had it digitised, allowing for some to be released over the years. But although Tulchin and Lauro tried to get a film made, they couldn't come to an amicable understanding before their agreement expired, and the footage was returned to Tulchin's basement.

It was only upon his death in 2017 an announcement was made that a film using Tulchin's footage would finally happen, and while *Summer of Soul* celebrates the work of Tony Lawrence, it doesn't reveal anything about his life.

This is simply because so little is known, and even those who knew Tony Lawrence aren't sure what happened to him. Instead, we have his music, and his festivals, which were thankfully recorded and preserved so the Harlem Cultural Festival can once again be seen all around the world. •

BESIDE

In 1982 French record label Celluloid released five hip hop singles, including Fab Five Freddy's *Change The Beat*. The song became famous as the source of the "ahhhh this stuff is really fresh!" vocal sample, but it also stands out as one of the earliest recordings of rapping in French.

This was provided by an American, Ann Marie Boyle. The story goes that the label wanted Freddy to rap in French, and they had written it out phonetically for him. Ann was there and since she spoke French, she took the mic to show him how it was done. The result impressed everyone so much her recording became the songs B-side, which also gave Ann her artist name: Beside or B-Side, with one release also crediting her as Fab Five Betty.

Ann featured on three more of the early Celluloid 12" singles, including Tribe 2's *What I Like*, Phase II's *The Roxy*, and Time Zone's *The Wildstyle* where she raps with Afrika Bambaataa in French and English.

In 1984 Ann released her next single *Odeon* with Bernard Fowler. It featured production from Afrika Bambaataa, and a B-side with lyrics written by Vivien Goldman. Then, for her album *Cairo Nights* in 1985, Beside became B-Side.

The album saw Ann move away from hip hop and explored more of a new wave sound, which received favourable reviews in *Cash Box, Spin,* and *Interview* magazines in the US, as well as *Spex* in Germany.

Although she's released only one album to date, Ann's music has remained talked about thanks to the popularity of those early Celluloid singles. Now, it's time to put a record on and turn the page to read our interview…

Pictured Opposite: B-Side photographed by Alain Bizos (c1981)

You're credited for the graphic design on several of the rap records released by Celluloid, including Fab Five Freddy's *Change The Beat*. Were you working in design before your music career took off?
I was in art school at Parsons School of Design when we made the record, so my friends and I did a lot of the graphic design and lettering for all the records. I also drew the art for the single *Odeon*'s sleeve with the scissors and record.

As well as *Change The Beat*, you also rapped on Tribe 2's *What I Like*, Phase II's *The Roxy*, and Time Zone's *Wildstyle*. Were these all part of the same sessions?
Those were separate side projects conceived and recorded in the spirit of the times, mixing hip hop culture and rapping with the mostly white "downtown" music scene.

The French, specifically Celluloid Records, were instrumental in seeding this early mix of collaboration. It was done with a light touch and few contracts or formalities as I remember. Just people eager to collaborate. Stylists and photographers were also part of it all, like Maripol of Madonna and others fame and Sophie Bramly, a French photographer who just published an amazing book of photographs from those days.

After all these records came out there was a French tour called the NYC Rap Tour in 1982. Were you on that tour and had you been to France before?
I was on a tour to Los Angeles and on the French tour but I didn't perform on the French tour. I don't remember why, but I think it was opening for The Clash and the punk shows at that time

Pictured: B-Side and Afrika Bambaataa photographed by Alain Bizos (c1981)

Pictured L-R: Change The Beat (1982), Odeon (1984), Odeon (French pressing) (1984)

were super dangerous! Fred was the opening act. Later there may have been another tour but I was not on it.

Your next single *Odeon* was released in 1984 and you performed it on French TV. Because you were singing and rapping in French, was your music more popular in France than the US?
Yes. The music was marketed better in France but also France was much more open to this new sound than America at the time. Most people in USA were scratching their heads and assuming rap was a weird fad that would go away! That's if they even knew it existed.

That video was shot in the Paris metro with Bernard Fowler, an amazing singer who taught me harmony and went on to tour with the Rolling Stones.

***Odeon*'s B-side *Jive Guys* was written by Vivien Goldman, and she performs vocals on the track too. How did that collaboration come about, and were you aware of her music too?**
Vivien was a journalist at the time, and I assume she just got in on the fun and freedom of the scene. Her metier was journalism not music that I was aware of, but she was a great performer and was also one of the Funk Queens, a trio put together by Afrika Bambaataa who along with Fab 5 was very instrumental in bridging the gap from the Bronx to Downtown.

The Funk Queens were me, Vivien and a rapper from uptown named Lisa Lee. We are featured rapping on *Timezone*, a Celluloid/Bambaataa production. Bam, as we called him, was also responsible for putting *Change The Beat* on the map. He played it uptown and it caught on from there. He was very open to all kinds of music.

There's a few different Bambaataa releases which mention The Funk Queens or Funk Queen. Was that always you?
I'm not sure but I think the term was a used for whichever female performers were interested in participating on a given recording as separate from their other work as solo artists. There were not a lot of women getting attention in hip hop at the time so it was to Bam's credit that he created the construct of "the Funk Queens".

For the album *Cairo Nights, Odeon* and *Jive Guys* aren't on it. Do you remember why they were left off?
Cairo Nights was a solo album with new types of tracks, one written by guest writer Kevin Coyne specifically for me to step into a new direction. Solo album is the key phrase.

Pictured: The two editions of Cairo Nights (1985), with the US pressing on the right.

On *Cairo Nights* it sounds like you're moving away from rap and doing more New Wave / Pop songs. Was this the style of music you were more interested in exploring?
Yes. In my mind it was still more experimenting and trying something new. Bernard Zekri as well wrote some amazing songs for *Cairo Nights* and I really enjoyed growing into that music.

There's two covers for the album. The US version is a colourful photo by Thi-Linh Le, and the European version is a more minimal photo by Johnny Rozsa of you in a leather dress. Which one do you prefer?
For sure the Cover by Thi-Linh shot in New York. It was styled by Maripol with hers and my clothes, plus an amazing pants skirt by Andre Walker, an incredibly innovative and fun designer. I loved everything about that shoot and the styling.

The London shoot was to be more commercial and "Euro hip" I guess. I could not stand in the 7-inch high heels and so we have the floor pose- voila! I was not really into rubber/trendy clothing at the time either, but people love that one!

Was there anything else recorded for the album which wasn't released?
No.

Were there plans for a second album, and did you continue working in the music industry at all?
No plans for more. Being young we all moved on to new projects and I went on with Art School and other more alternative music projects in Chicago and Los Angeles, I had several bands over the following years and put an illustrated art/poetry zine in Chicago, and now I'm in LA. I have usually been active in music and art through the years. Living my best life. •

Pictured opposite: B-Side photographed by Alain Bizos (c1983)

A special thank you to Alain for permission to use his photographs.
You can see more of his work online at: alainbizos.fr

Philip Samartzis

Photographs provided by Philip Samartzis

Philip Samartzis is a Melbourne based sound artist and composer who has been releasing solo work since the 1990s, including several multichannel installations. In 2010 and 2016 he visited Antarctica to make field recordings of the environment, and this year has seen two new albums based on this work released by Room 40.

I first met Philip almost a decade ago when he was my lecturer at university. Then earlier this year we met again when I attended an event of his titled *Polar Patterns*. The audience sat in a dark theatre while Philip's recordings of Antarctic winds played around us through the surround sound system. It was an intense experience, and I immediately wanted to speak to him further about this work.

Recently I've been listening to all the different versions of your Antarctic recordings. There are the ones from the NGV, The Capitol Theatre, and the two albums with Eugene Ughetti. What appeals to you so much about these recordings?
It's one of my major projects, if not the major project. I'm actually making a sound map of the Australian Antarctic Territory, and it's been more or less 15 years between the first time I went there and the time I finished the project. So it's basically a 15 year study of the Australian Antarctic Territory soundscape through not only the natural environment, but through the infrastructure, the technology, the research stations, the social structure and environment of those remote research stations as well. So it's a fairly comprehensive study.

What you're hearing then are different iterations of some of the outcomes that I've produced. It's kind of an ongoing process and I often create installations or release compositions to mark different

phases of the project. But also, to test ideas in the public forum, generate conversation, debate, and develop new perspectives of the project as it goes. So it's a continually evolving kind of thing and I'm destined to go there again next year, which is likely to be my last trip.

The blizzard I presented at The Capitol was a demonstration of those powerful forces that one finds in the Antarctic continent. It was recorded on my trip to Antarctica in 2016 when I visited Casey Station in order to record wind, because clearly, Antarctic is the windiest, driest continent on earth, and I hadn't really recorded wind to a great degree in previous trips.

I've always listened to the Antarctic environment as a piece of music, essentially, a piece of percussive music because everything's kind of resonating and rattling and has kind of rhythmic cycles because of the wind. So if you just close your eyes and listen to it, it's not that far removed from a 20th century modern classical music that's abrasive and using extending instrumental technique and a whole range of things.

I imagined, what if I worked with a music ensemble and traded sounds. So my recordings at Casey Station ended up being the score for Speak Percussion to then develop a set of responses to. Then we took the recordings away and probably two thirds of what you're hearing on *Polar Force* are instruments designed to mimic the sound of an Antarctic Research Station. So that was the intent, to blur the boundary between the performed and the recorded and represent that within an environment that resembles a research station in terms of architecture and design. And that's the *Polar Force* project.

I found the sounds really interesting because they seem alien, because they're from Antarctica, but then some sound kind of familiar too. On the NGV website, I was listening to ice sheets, which sound like boiling water, and then the sea ice recording sound like the ice is singing, like a dolphin. You aren't expecting to hear things like that.
No, you can't expect it, you have no expectations. I kind of now have certain expectations, but certainly when those recordings are made, it's like going to Mars and there's nothing to reference. You know, before I went there, I had no reference point other than maybe listening to a few examples like Douglas Quin, and some of the recordings previous artists had done. But there's nothing I can compare to, not only the environment, but just the general conditions. The clothing you have to wear because of the heightened risk associated with doing work in Antarctica. The dynamic weather. I mean, things change all the time so no two days are ever alike, and within all of that, you're just trying to find something in the field that you can record.

So everything was a surprise to me. And also, I was very careful not to privilege one thing over the other, so the sound of the helicopters were as interesting to me as the bubbling water coming out of a piece of ice.

In Antarctica, do you go out just by yourself?
To go out in the field I work with a training officer who I'd be assigned, so you've always got someone to look out for you whilst you're off station. But while I'm on station, I'm free to do my recordings on my own and within the station limits. If you want to move off station then you have to have all the permissions in order to do that, a survival plan, take your survival kit with you, all that kind of thing. You need support there, and sometimes you need additional transport or a helicopter depending on where you want to go. It's a complex planning process that you need to

undertake to do anything, and that's why it's hard to be spontaneous because it needs to be very well planned and everyone knows what they're doing, to mitigate risk.

The crew who go with you, are they just sitting there staring at their watches while you're recording the wind?
Yeah, it can be challenging. I usually get them to help out and swing a boom pole, or something like that. Some people are really interested in what you're doing and really want to get involved and help out in any way they can. Others just want to get out and take a look around because they're all working. My job is to record, therefore, I go out to all these really interesting places. Whereas if you're a cook, you're in the kitchen all day long and that's your job, and you don't go out because that's not essential. So I'm generally popular, because I'm like an exit strategy for a lot of people to get off station.

Earlier today, I finished listening to *Antarctica, an absent presence***, which has a narrator is reading your diaries. Was there a reason why you didn't narrate it yourself?**
Yeah, as I originally conceived it, it wasn't a work about me. So the narrator is someone else. One of the things about it was, the Antarctic stations are hyper masculine, a lot of alpha males dominate the environment and I wanted to have a sense of the other in terms of using a different personality and identity to convey the experiences that I encountered. So I tried to make it a little bit more ambivalent.

It was originally a French commission and was recorded in France with a French actress, and I asked the actresses to imagine they were sleep walking or dreaming, so their delivery was monotone. That was also a way of privileging the field recordings which are very expressive and dynamic and complex. The language and voice, and ways of describing through vocabulary is diminished because it pales in comparison to the sound of the glaciers, or the helicopters, or the elephant seals and things of that nature. So I was trying to reduce the authority of the actors, of the voice, which is often associated as the locus of truth. I wanted to change that balance between what you're hearing and what you're being told. So that was the idea behind it. But how did you go with it?

I really enjoyed it. I guess the monotone delivery lets you push it to the background sometimes. But then it would kind of just come back to me naturally, and it was very nice.
Yeah, I don't think we quite landed that. I think the French actress got there eventually. But they're trained to be expressive, so half the battle was just getting rid of the expression, keeping it measured, slow, and play with the form of radio drama and what that means.

It's also in reaction to the mythologizing that happens around Antarctica. So you've got the masculinity and then you've got the bold explorer, and it's at the disservice of a lot of the nuances that occur on the station, you know, the different types of personalities within that, the role of women on stations as well, and the power structures and dynamics that happen there too. It's very easy to present yourself in that hero mould and I'm forever trying to dance around that. The Antarctic is one of those frontier places that your identities often associated with it and defined by it. I'm an adventurer, sound artist kind of guy, but you won't meet a less adventurous type than me, you know, so it's a complete construct.

When I heard *Polar Patterns* **at The Capitol Theatre, I was wondering whether you consider it a performance or an installation?**
Essentially, I normally work towards sound installations. Aside from stereo compositions, my main mode of composing, particularly over the last, let's say 10 years or so have been multi-channel listening environments. So often you can see them as listening environments that you experience in a gallery kind of environment. It's a different form of engagement. It's this neutral white cube and you can populate it with all kinds of oral experiences, and the point I was making at The Capitol is that the theatre is a proscenium orientated experience. Everyone is sitting looking forward, so it's a very performative kind of experience where things happen over time. There's a beginning and an ending, and there's a kind of a ritual, if you will, of how you sit and engage with the work.

The thing I like about galleries is that you can walk in and out at any time, so the audience has agency to learn to engage with the artwork in any way. They're interested, and I like that. I don't want to be too prescriptive like, you must listen to it in this particular way.

But even though The Capitol is fantastic, that work was originally conceived as an installation in which you inhabit and move through at your own pace and are guided by your own set of interests. Whether you want to stay for three or four hours, or if two minutes is enough, it's entirely up to you.

When you recorded it, was the intention to present it in surround sound at some point or were you just kind of making the recordings with no idea what you do with them?
I'm usually composing in the field. So I'm selecting sounds in relation to one another and also in how they might be arranged once they've been recorded. Often that's to do with microphone technique and trying to get different perspectives of a certain event. So a close up recording, to get all the detail of the event, whatever it might be.

Then often, I'll set up microphones further away to get much more of the context of a space of action, and then even more distance as well. So slightly closer, mid shot, and long shot, and what that allows me to do is focus or balance the different elements of a recording. If I just want to reveal the nuance of a sound, then I don't necessarily need all the background stuff. But if I really want to privilege that wind or the ice that might be bubbling around this particular seal that I'm recording, then I'm setting the microphones up differently. But what that inevitably does is that I can play all three recordings back together with six speakers and I've recreated the sound field of that location just by registering different kinds of impressions of that particular place, or action.

So I'm continually thinking about that, because, although a lot of my work is heard in stereo, I think the practice of sound and music is in many ways being both enhanced and compromised by the lack of distribution and publication opportunities. So yes, you can put something on Spotify, or you can put it on YouTube. But it loses the context that you're often working towards to create a certain narrative or certain type of experience. So, the work you're hearing on the NGV website is a 16-channel installation that's been folded down into stereo just so people would hear it, because very few people get to hear the 16 channel work unless there's an exhibition on.

Is it difficult to record wind? Because normally, when you use a microphone, you're putting covers over the top of it, or you're pointing in a certain direction so you don't get wind. Does it feel unnatural to be trying to pick that up?
Yeah, it's the hardest thing to record and it becomes a real issue around methodology in terms of it's counterintuitive to the way we're often trained to remove low frequency energy and all the buffeting that occurs with air turbulence. So it became the focus and therefore I developed a whole range of different techniques in order to record the effects of wind.

Often, it's not wind on the microphone, and I think that's what a lot of listeners get confused by. What I'm recording is the sound of wind against certain objects, and often I'm placing the microphones in a place that's outside the direction of the wind, in order to record the sound of the wind in the environment. Sometimes I use my own body and stand between the microphone and the wind. I'm putting microphones in the ice and then you can capture the wind blowing across the

ice field without necessarily capturing the sound of wind on the microphones.

I also was prototyping Rycote's new range of cyclone windshields, which they were just in the process of production, and they were incredibly effective at mitigating the effects of wind on the microphone. So the technology allowed me to capture new representations of wind that possibly wasn't available a few years ago before these types of things were developed. Because where I was recording I was in blizzards and things got frozen as I was recording, and a lot of technology couldn't cope with that kind of extremity. But the gear that I had was able to deal with most of those conditions pretty well.

The album *Polar Force* is coming out on CD. Is there an appeal to still release on CD while everything else is going digital?
For all intents and purposes, most people are likely to encounter the work through the digital download option. But, you do get the benefit of the of the object in this instance, in that there's the book that comes with the CD. Then the record is a different thing we've produced as well, and the vinyl sounds pretty impressive, from the test pressing, I must say.

Does it change the way you interact with the work as a listener? Because obviously, there's vinyl surface noise and it's going to degrade over time?
No, we composed it for vinyl and we kept that in mind. So, the *Array* LP is more or less a companion to *Polar Force*, but it emphasizes much more of the recordings and less of the instrumentation.

Whereas *Polar Force,* as I mentioned before, is much more about the instrumentation and performance contextualized by the sound recordings and the balance is a bit different. The record is kind of harsh and abrasive and noisy in terms of musically, and we're not trying to go for subtlety in the sense of quiet passages and delicate moments. But I mean, I don't listen to vinyl that much. So just hearing that surface noise and cracks and pops I find charming anyhow. •

Polar Force and *Array* are both out now on Room 40. For more information see: room40.org

Astro Sounds is a new vinyl-only hip hop label based in NSW, Australia. It's run by Jason Murphy, who previously ran another label Parallax View through the early 2000s.

They've released two 7" singles so far, and by the time you're reading this they should have their third or fourth available too. After hearing their first release, I spoke with Jason about Astro Sounds and what goes into starting a record label these days.

Congratulations on Astro Sounds putting out their first release. What made you want to start the label?
Thanks. It's been a crazy road, but I'm enjoying the process. Starting the label was something I've wanted to do again for a while now. Not only to incorporate my graphic design skills, but to release music from friends who don't want to go the digital route, but would prefer it to be on wax.

My mate DJ Soup started up a weekly radio show on Sydney station 2SER called *Lockdown Selector* in April 2020. I designed the flyer for the show and he later sent me some tracks he had been working on. I loved them and thought they needed to get out there, but not via the unadventurous avenue of digital downloads. They needed to be pressed on wax. Not only so other vinyl obsessive deejays like myself could play them out, but by anyone with a record player who could share in the experience.

Were there many ups and downs to getting the label started while Australia went in and out of lockdown?
You betcha. Like so many of us, I had pretty much all of my work vanish due to the pandemic, so I had no incoming revenue. I had enquired at the pressing plant about costs, but then I was hearing about lengthy delays caused by lockdowns, new machine parts taking forever to arrive from overseas and general supply issues caused by a bigger demand. So I thought it best to wait until these issues were resolved. I kept abreast of the situation by watching via social media the experience of several people who had already started the process locally and waited until the coast was getting clearer. So now the issue was how was I going to afford it with no money coming in.

Well, restrictions started to finally lift in the second quarter of 2021. I booked a party at a venue and by the time the event came around, the COVID restrictions had eased enough that we could have at least 45% capacity and dancing was allowed. The party was sold out and I asked the fellow deejays if they would donate their fees as well as what we made via ticket sales to kickstart the label. They graciously agreed and so I now had the funds to proceed.

What's the process of getting something onto vinyl these days?
First you need the music and to have a solid relationship with the music creators. You also have to like the music enough to go the distance for it and be passionate about it. When you are dealing with small runs of vinyl, it's never about financial remuneration, it's about creation sharing. Naturally the artist needs to be compensated for their work, so you strike up a deal that is fair to both parties.

The major financial hurdle is actually paying for the pressing, it's hard to afford an upright payment. Releasing vinyl is a huge effort, but totally worth it. Having a record out also helps a lot with promotion as it's another cool item to add to the resume. And considering that pretty much everyone I've talked to about releasing music on the label is also a deejay, they totally get the vibe and are only none too happy to have someone else take care of that aspect for them.

Once all the relationships are built, you'll be sent a draft of a track or tracks. You'll gravitate towards something in particular and offer recommendations, but totally out of respect for the artist's work. Then they go away and work on it some more and eventually you'll agree on the final work.

You have to take into consideration both sides of a record. Mood and length. If the tracks are too similar that could be a negative. If they are too long, they might have to be edited down. Once all

agreed up they need to be mastered. Usually you'll get a master for digital use and more importantly one specifically for vinyl pressing. Then you'll send off the finalised files to the pressing plant together with the artwork.

If you are fortunate (no lockdowns) they will send you a test pressing after a few weeks. You then have a listen on a few sound systems and send one to the music creator to get their approval. Once it's all given the thumbs up. you let the pressing plant know and they will start the manufacturing. The next part is a whole other ball game. Packing and posting. Wrapping your head around weights, secure packaging and making sure the orders are correct.

Were you tempted to just make them digital releases, given that's how most people listen to stuff now? Or is the physical product as important as the music?
I'm not even 1% interested in digital downloads. I've been buying records since I was a teenager. I published my own hip hop fanzine Vapors in the late 80s where I reviewed only records. I worked in a record store (Phat Wax) and then I ended up opening and co-owning my own store The Lounge Room that specialised in wax. I also deejayed out and about with only records, and started the label Parallax View with a mate in the early 2000s. So vinyl has been pretty central to my identity for most of my life. Of course the music is important, but the medium is even more important to me. The whole community aspect that surrounds the participation of those involved with anything vinyl related I find fascinating and compelling. I spend so much of my time on some form of digital platform, that the mere involvement of participating with an analogue format is extremely cathartic. When you go to someone's house you usually pay attention to the furnishings around you, not the content on someone's laptop.

You've focused on 7" singles for your initial releases. Will there be 12" EPs or albums later on?
When I was a young and buying records I never cared much for 7" singles. It was all about 12" format. Instrumentals, dubs and acapellas were extremely coveted, especially for the music I was interested in, which was hip hop. 7" singles, which are more commonly referred to as 45s because of the preferred speed, only really started taking a hold in the last 5/6 years in hip hop circles. So the most affordable way to become a part of the process again was to embrace the 7" single format first and foremost. The label started out with that in mind and it will be the backbone, but only recently the idea of the occasionally 12" single has arisen. So most likely we will see a 12" release in 2022, but the mainstay will be the smaller format. I really want to do a 10" but the Melbourne pressing plants haven't had time to facilitate that desire, and I'm sure they aren't getting bombarded with requests for that much maligned format.

The character in Flushmaster Soup's *Humanoid Terror* artwork reminds me of something by Moebius. Who did the artwork, and was it created in response to the music?
That was from a talented friend of mine Simon. IG: simonarthurmatt. A stay-at-home dad who scribbles occasionally for freelance projects or for his own creative release. I'm sure he is an admirer of the French artist Moebius like so many of us our age. It wasn't intentional to draw on that style.

The track title for the 7" was *Humanoid Terror*, so I think my brief was something like, 'some robot-ish space dude playing records'. The initial intention was to have Simon illustrate every record cover, but then I thought, that could be complicated, challenging and maybe suffer from

repetition. Then I thought that every release should be by a different artist. Simon will be back with further projects, and one in particular that he will be involved in will be a unique release in 2022.

You've also resurrected your old label Parallax View. What's the difference between your two labels?
Astro Sounds is strictly instrumental. I'm a pro-sampling person, so the majority of the music will be derived from that style of music making, whereas Parallax View was strictly all Australian hip hop, though only heavily sample based as well. We released 2 CD compilations and several 12"s and EPs in the early 2000s, but never any 7" singles. That will change in 2022. We have some new songs being worked on right now as well as the vinyl debuts of tracks that have only ever been released on CDs.

What are your plans for the next 12 months?
It's so hard to divulge anything that has been planned as I've learnt not to hedge my bets and announce anything before it materialises. But I will say, there's something that kids might enjoy, another thing that could be played at next year's Halloween events and maybe even a cassette release.

But, ideally I would like to release one record a month. So many factors weigh into that aspiration that it might not be feasible. Hopefully I can release music that people will like and think it's worth spending money on. One of the best things I've noticed is when you tell someone that their music might end up on wax, that in itself becomes a huge motivating factor for the artist. COVID-19 has thrown all sorts of curveballs. There was a lot of downtime, but for those with families and young children it has proven to be very challenging to find the time. People need proper headspace to concentrate on music. Hard when you are home-schooling. Receiving enough quality music to schedule for release in the next 12months will be dependent on how we head out of the pandemic. So far it looks to be a full roster, but when people go back to work fulltime they may not be able to commit. When people are ready then that's when we'll discuss a release. You can't rush art. Otherwise it becomes commerce if it adheres to a rigid schedule. Fuck that. •

Check out Astro Sounds at: astrosoundsrecords.bandcamp.com

As we went to press Astro Sounds were just releasing the labels third release, with a fourth and fifth already being prepared for next year. Keep an eye on their socials, and be fast if you want their vinyl because so far they have been selling out quick!

GROOVIN´ TO THE MAX

Mo' Wax Records is best known for helping define trip hop, the early-90s genre of downtempo hip hop. The record label was based in the UK, but made connections internationally, with labels such as Toy's Factory in Japan, Solesides in the USA, and Marlboro Music in Germany.

This allowed for releases by DJ Shadow, DJ Krush, and UNKLE to gain popularity around the world. But wait a second! Marlboro Music? Is that real? It's got to be fake, right? Although many people believe Marlboro Music and their releases are funny bootlegs, I'm here to tell you they're real.

Marlboro Music began in Munich, Germany in 1986 after the Marketing Director of Philip Morris Germany Knut Föckler set up a new subsidiary operation called International Design and Entertainment (IDE) as part of a brand diversification program. The idea was to capitalise on the popularity of Marlboro Cigarette's iconography and brand, and use this to move into new markets. These included Marlboro Travel (Marlboro Reisen), the Marlboro / Philip Morris Design Shop, and Marlboro Music.

It's important to note this was a German initiative and shouldn't be confused with the Canadian and American Marlboro Musics which ran Marlboro Music Festivals in North America. But Marlboro Music in Germany did their own concert promotions too, and in 1987 held their first Marlboro Music Rock Festival.

When it first began, Marlboro Music was rock oriented, with acts like German alt rock group Playhaus and soft rocker Dan Lucas on their roster. Stephan Beringer joined as label manager in 1990 just as Marlbor Music began to embrace a wider range of genres. "The label had some good success already, but with the move to focus on UK dub dance, acid house and hip hop, things really started taking off", he said.

Starting in 1992, Marlboro Music released a series of compilation albums titled *London Underground*, compiled by Dave Henley and Justin Langlands. The London-based pair had been making music as The Blood Brothers and Pressure Drop, and while visiting them Stephan would also drop into Honest Jon's, a record store James Lavelle worked in when he started Mo' Wax.

Pictured L-R: Mathias Modica, Klaus Pagel, Tim Stickelbrucks, Matthias Kürten, James Lavelle, Stephan Petz, Kay-Oliver Wegener, and Steve Finan (c1993/1994)

"We had a good thing going on with Pressure Drop who had just charted in the Top 50 with their debut album, and between that and me being at Honest Jon's every week looking for new acts, I must have met James," Stephan said.

The second volume of the London Underground series was released in 1993, and featured Palm Skin Productions' *Like Brothers* and Marden Hill's *Come On* which had both originally been released on Mo' Wax.

Mo' Wax was started by James Lavelle in 1992 when he was 18 years old, reusing the name he used for a DJ night in Oxford, and a column he wrote in *Straight No Chaser*. Initially Mo' Wax released acid jazz 12" singles similar in style to those on Giles Peterson's Talkin' Loud label. But by 1993 Mo' Wax was moving beyond that sound as they put out fresh sounding music by artists like DJ Shadow and begun to grow an international audience.

Stephan Beringer signed a deal with James Lavelle and Steve Finan (co-owner of Mo' Wax at this point) in 1993 for Marlboro Music to begin releasing the Mo' Wax catalogue in Germany. Tim Stickelbrucks also joined Marlboro Music in 1993 as A&R and he still remembers when the announcement came.

"It was my second day with the label and they had a big announcement like, 'We signed with Mo' Wax, we have this great label'. At that time, there was already a hype going around Mo' Wax and James. It wasn't commercially big, but everybody talked about it and James was kind of looked at as the new wonder kid. Then, my job was basically bringing Mo Wax to Germany," Tim said.

The deal was announced at PopComm, an annual music trade show held in Cologne, and to celebrate there was special merchandise produced featuring the Mo' Wax and Marlboro Music

logos. “We produced a lot of swag,” Tim said. “I remember we did this Mo’ Wax DJ bag which became the thing everybody had to have.”

In November 1993 Marlboro Music sponsored a Mo’ Wax Tour in Germany featuring DJ Shadow and James Lavelle, but the first proper Marlboro Music / Mo’ Wax release was Deep Joy’s *Take* 12” single, released in 1994.

The artwork was created by Headcharge, a graphic design studio run by Hans Hammers Jr. II who had begun partnering with Marlboro Music in 1992 and were the exclusive design and communication agency for the label until it closed.

At the time Mo’ Wax releases had a distinctive look designed by Ian “Swifty” Swift. There was no cover art, and instead the cover was blank apart a strip featuring information about the music, logos and barcode, similar to an obi strip seen on many Japanese albums. The majority of the first 20 releases on Mo’ Wax featured this bare look, until Marlboro Music stepped in and wanted to do something different.

“When we signed up, I think it was one of the first times they had the financial ability to do things they couldn’t have done before, like investing more into their artwork. So we helped with that a lot, and our deal was the first step”, Tim said.

Hans Hammers Jr. II worked on each of the Marlboro Music releases, and designed the logos and slogans which appeared on them, like the “Groovin’ To The Max”. When Mo’ Wax became involved with the label, Hans had his own ideas to help make these new records stand out.

“Marlboro Music was quite marketing orientated,” Hans said. “It was our idea to give the Mo´ Wax/Marlboro Music releases a distinct visual makeover that would enhance the visibility of the Marlboro Music logo, and give the whole artwork a different spin without destroying its original iconic impact.”

But while Marlboro Music wanted attention-grabbing visual artwork, for James Lavelle the most important part was the music.

“We were very keen on having artwork for every release while James just wanted to get stuff out,” Tim said. “With some artists the artwork was important to him, but for others he would just want to get it out fast. So in the beginning we printed a big sticker to put on the cover and release it. But then we decided we’d rather wait another week or two and have proper artwork made as that was pretty important to us.”

The first Deep Joy single featured a sticker designed by Headcharge over its cover. But from then on each Mo’ Wax release on Marlboro Music featured full colour artwork. Similar to the early Mo’ Wax releases, Marlboro Music adopted an obi strip design down the left-hand side of their covers, with a big Mo’ Wax logo to separate it from the rest of their releases.

With Hans in charge of design, this period saw a shift in Marlboro Music’s visual style, and Stephan Beringer told me they were proud of their artwork and gave it a lot of attention.

Pictured L-R: Blackalicious - Melodica (1994) and the Marlboro Music logo which appeared on the cover.

"Our fan base was very strong, and I remember many people saying to me that they would buy our releases without even listening into them. That's how consistent we were," he said.

Following the Deep Joy single, Marlboro Music had a backlog of Mo' Wax releases at their disposal. But they wouldn't release everything Mo' Wax had put out. Instead, they released *Royaltie$ Overdue*, a compilation of music from the last two years of Mo' Wax. It was an announcement telling everyone this is Mo' Wax, and it's here now.

From then on, releases would appear in Germany around the same time as they came out in the UK, with Marlboro Music sometimes waiting a week or two so there would be some hype in the press, and the songs would already be appearing on DJ club charts.

From 1994, Mo' Wax fully embraced the idea of full colour artwork too, and they began featuring a wide range of visual artists, from Massive Attack's 3D, photographer B+, and graphic designer Ben Drury. With more visually appealing work at their disposal, Marlboro Music began to make fewer design changes to their Mo' Wax releases, and the obi strip design was left behind.

Stephan Beringer had left Marlboro Music a few months after the Mo' Wax deal was signed, and Matthias Kürten took over his role as label manager. Matthias spoke to the German music magazine *Musik Express* in their August 1998 issue, and discussed Marlboro Music's work with Mo' Wax. "We get along wonderfully with James. If things didn't work out on a personal level, then we wouldn't be able to deal with each other on business either," he said.

What wasn't mentioned is that Mo' Wax had switched to Motor Music in 1997 as their German distributor, and instead of special German releases like Marlboro Music had been creating, the Mo' Wax albums from then on were identical to what was being released in the UK and the rest of Europe. At the same time, Marlboro Music was interested in chasing commercially successful artists, whereas, outside of DJ Shadow, Mo' Wax was generally more underground.

As their deal ended, the final new Mo' Wax release on Marlboro Music arrived in 1997, Latyrx's *The Album*. While the final release featuring both labels was a compilation CD which accompanied the August 1998 issue of *Musik Express*. Featuring six Mo' Wax artists including DJ Shadow and DJ Krush, it marks the end of the two labels working together.

While Matthias Kürten had discussed growth and signing new artists when he spoke with *Musik Express* in 1998, Marlboro Music would close itself down around 1999 or 2000.

Tim Stickelbrucks had left by 1998, but kept in touch with his colleagues, and he described a year of uncertainty as people at Marlboro Music began to realise they might shut down.

"There's no exact hard end date. They stopped releasing anything and started a process of returning all the master rights back to the original artists. It would have been unfair to hold the owner's work hostage once they stopped operating," Tim said.

By the end of the 90s the world was changing, and the idea of a cigarette company running a record label would have seemed a bit strange to many. For context, in Australia cigarette advertising had been banned outright in 1992 and was already banned for the most part since the 1970s. During the 90s in the USA, Phillip Morris was in the midst of a legal battle with the government over cigarettes and how they were being marketed.

Back in Germany, in 1998 Matthias Kürten had dismissed comments from *Musik Express* that Marlboro Music was just an advertisement for cigarettes hiding in plain sight. As the magazine noted, Marlboro Music wasn't just sponsoring events, but was one of the most supportive independent record labels around, with artists actively seeking them out due to their good reputation.

"When we started over ten years ago, we had to explain to people at length what we stand for and what we want," Matthias said in 1998. "Today it's more the other way round, we are respected - also by the artists."

But even with their popularity and respect among artists, the label realised their association with Marlboro's cigarettes was no longer such a good look, and the label shut down.

Now, many people don't even believe Marlboro Music was real. On Discogs, a popular website to buy and sell records, all Marlboro Music items are banned for sale. The reason why isn't clear, but many users mistakenly believe the label is unofficially using the Marlboro branding and that their releases are bootlegs.

When I asked Discogs themselves they said the items were blocked either because they "are not authorized for sale in the Marketplace (for example bootleg, pirate, or counterfeit)" or "the artist or artist's representative has identified the release as an unauthorized reproduction. Therefore, it is not available for sale." They cited their Sales and Transaction Policy which says items listed for sale on Discogs must not violate intellectual property rights, such as copyright or trademarks.

It's worth noting that sale prices for Marlboro Music / Mo' Wax releases have been inflated elsewhere partially due to Discogs not allowing them for sale. None are particularly rare, and

Pictured: Stephan Beringer and James Lavelle (February 1994)

often they can be picked up from German sellers on eBay, because thankfully eBay allows their sale.

But there are still two releases which stand out and will be of interest to collectors. The first is DJ Krush's *Strictly Turntablised*, an album released by Mo' Wax in 1994 and which appears in several German advertisements mentioning a pressing by Marlboro Music on vinyl and CD. No collector I spoke with has seen a Marlboro Music copy, and none is mentioned anywhere online, but Hans Hammers Jr. II assures me it does exist.

The second release worth noting did come out, but still has some mystery attached to it. In 1995 an album by Donut Productions was released by Marlboro Music with the Mo' Wax logo on it, and while every other Mo' Wax / Marlboro Music release appears on both labels, for some reason this one only ever came out in Germany.

Nobody I spoke with was quite sure why this happened, but Tim Stickelbrucks remembered releasing it, telling me, "It was a little bit chaotic back in the day. We talked about it with James, and he gave it to us and told us we should put it out. So he was aware we were putting it out."

It's just another mystery in the story of Marlboro Music, and while we may never get a clear answer, if you're curious to learn more about Donut Productions we've interviewed one their members Marc Lariviere on the very next page. •

Pictured L-R: J Squash, DJ Gunga Din, and Macaroonie

DONUT PRODUCTIONS.

Donut Productions were a three-piece hip-hop group from northern California who released their album *$19.95* on German label Marlboro Music in 1995. The album was intended for Mo' Wax in the UK, but only appeared in Germany, through a deal the two labels had.

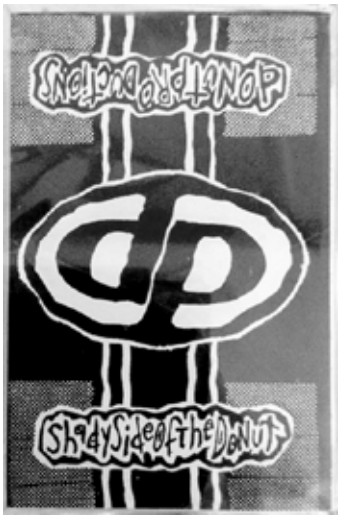
It's been theorised the Mo' Wax catalogue number MW 041 was intended for *$19.95*, which would have been released by early 1996. But while some have tried asking Mo' Wax founder James Lavelle about the missing catalogue numbers before, it's been to no avail. The groups song *Wire Cutter* did appear on the Mo' Wax *Headz 2B* compilation, making it their one appearence on the label.

Donut Productions consisted of Josh Miller (J Squash), Noah Daar (DJ Gunga Din), and Marc Lariviere (Macaroonie), and I recently spoke with Marc about the group and his other rap alias lifeseeker.

When did Donut Productions start, and how many members were there?
Donut Productions, first called "Donut Posse" started as a musical thing around '89. Me and my boy DJ Gunga Din had been talking about doing a group. Him DJing me rhyming. Then our good friend Josh Miller (Squash or J-Squash) was down too. He moved back to the bay from college and started working on beats, so it was three of us. I went by M.C. Macaroonie at that time.

The first song we made was vocals over a tape loop we made our apartment in SF CA. on Shrader St. From there we started making tapes of multiple songs, that we would give out., and me and J Squash moved to the Fulton house soon after.

In 93 we released the *Shady Side of the Donut*, a tape with both lyrical tracks and instrumentals, which was our usual by that time. J Squash was rhyming more now alongside me too. In the beginning I wrote most of his rhymes, but as we progressed he started writing more of his own stuff, and got really good!



Donut Productions
Shady Side Of The Donut
Dance Pass • Why I Laugh • Frankenstein For Presidents
Hooks • Solve All These God Damn Problems • Ouk Thet Reglam
A
Pictured: The Shady Side of the Donut casette tape (1993)

Shady Side of the Donut enjoyed a good amount of popularity, and was favourably reviewed in a local paper. It was also handed by friends of ours to people in LA. Later we heard that people from the Grand Royal Beastie Boy camp had heard it, and there was back and forth about us going down to LA to record with Mario Caldato. We were very excited about this as it seemed it could be a big step forward. As it turned out it fell through, but subsequently, I'm not sure how, out of the Grand Royal thing our stuff was heard by James Lavelle, who then offered to release some of our stuff, including *Wire Cutter* and the *$19.95* CD, which is made up mostly from tracks from the *Shady Side of the Donut*.

Did you meet James Lavelle? How was that?
Yes me and Squash went out to dinner with DJ Shadow and James Lavelle. They came to the Fulton house and listened to some tracks. Then we got dinner.

Do you remember when you met with them? I know Lavelle and Shadow were recording with Mario C in LA in September 1995, and Max Burgos was there too. Maybe that's when they heard your tape?
Could be, Max was definitely involved. He was friends with a bunch of people I knew and lived with in SF. That's how our tape got to Grand Royal. Mario and others liked it, and so we were talking. Grand Royal also sent some dude to come by and check us out. He stayed at our house and we kicked it with him. We met with Shadow before the *$19.95* CD came out, coz they listened to *Inner Galactic Fanatic* at our house which ended up on the CD. Sounds like it could've been around then, would make sense.

Were there plans for anymore releases with Mo' Wax?
No, not that I know of. Squash talked to them more than me. After the thing with Grand Royal and then Mo' Wax, the dynamic in the group changed. J Squash, Josh, seemed more focused on instrumental stuff, and that led me to moving on with my rap stuff and creating "lifeseeker". Our hopes got really raised up talking to Grand Royal.

That was a really big deal back then, and when it didn't pan out, it kind of fractured our vibe, plus we were young and living wild. At one point you're just doing music to do it, then expectations go way up, and that was hard to transition out of. With Mo' Wax, it was great to get a little exposure, but trip hop, as they were doing it, wasn't what I was going for exactly. That's how I saw it. So after that it was time to move on. Squash was more focused on doing instrumental stuff he thought would work for Mo' Wax and that left me to my own devices.

The *$19.95* credits list the following people as writing or producing: J. Miller, M. Lariviere, N. Daar, and The Front Bumper Project. Was The Front Bumper Project another group you were all part of at the time?
Oh shit I forgot about The Front Bumper. That was something Josh was cooking up to be more his Mo' Wax thing I think.

Do you know if they released anything after Donut Productions?
Man I haven't talked to Josh in a long time, not many of our friend group have. But nah nothing after Donut Productions, as far as I know.

You mentioned making tape loops on the early Donut Posse tracks. How did you record everything back then? Did you hire a studio, or did you have a four track in your room?
We were just on 4 track and then maybe 8 track cassette recorders. It was ancient. So we started looping on a tape because we had no sampler at the time, but later we were sampling and using an old Mac to sequence. I just sat and listened back then, put in my 2 cents. Josh was on the beats.

So after Donut Productions you started releasing music as lifeseeker. How did your sound evolve between the two projects? Did you start producing your beats?
I got an Akai S2000 and did all the beats, which was really cool for me, coz things had gotten frustrating with Josh. He would flake on me a lot, so I had to get busy on my own, which was good for me. Josh probably gave me advice on my setup, plus he was on the first lifeseeker album vocally. On *Gone Guru* and *Middle Earth*. In a way lifeseeker was my way of keeping Donut Productions going, but Josh showed up a total of two days. Still he did rad, he's an amazing

musician. He also helped on the beat for *Killer Moves* on the first lifeseeker record.

Then the sound changed coz I was more in charge. I wanted to make wilder shit with characters and crazy concepts. You can hear that on Inner Galactic, but it wasn't done that well coz our work ethic wasn't really clicking. On lifeseeker I was hanging with my boy Tommy! Who was a really funny and strange artist/filmmaker/ performance artist. Plus he had bands like "boo hisss pfffftthh let's throw some tomatoes at these guys" (that was the name of the band). He had another band called "the Tex Pistols" (punk rock with a country western twist as in huge neon green cowboy hats) and his other band was "Poo Poo Pee Pee Pants".

That was my best bud for a long time. He killed himself right before the second lifeseeker CD came out. But yeah, I had always been guiding the Donut sound by sitting there and listening, but I finally was set loose to go further with it. Plus Tommy was added to the mix, and he added a lot of fun, and his own expertise.

So it was just you and Tommy as lifeseeker?
Mostly me, but Tommy is on vocals on three songs, *Gone Guru, Middle Earth,* and *Pretty Decent*. Tommy helped with writing a number of the songs lyrics, also we came up with song concepts together. Josh did vocals on two songs *Gone Guru* and *Middle Earth*. Josh also assisted a bit in the Killer Moves beat. Gunga did scratches on *Mr. California, Middle Earth* (he killed that one) and *Majick Vehickle*.

I was reading the comments on YouTube for your song *Gone Guru II***. It's cool that you picked up a lot of fans when the original song was included in** *Dead Rising***.**
Yeah, that worked out well. Capcom had me back to do the heme song for the hero in *Dead Rising*, because *Gone Guru* did well in the first game. I didn't want to do a follow up to *Gone Guru* because they said I wouldn't own it. So I agreed to make some instrumental stuff for *Dead Rising 2*. Slowly but surely they coaxed me into writing lyrics for a track, and then boom I did that. But that's it. •

lifeseeker's music can be found on streaming services, including their 2020 album *Heavy Mellow*. Check out their videos on YouTube @ lifeseekerrecordings
Marc is also on Instagram @ lifeseeker.recordings

Pictured L-R: $19.95 (1995), Headz 2B (1996), Heavy Mellow (2020)

STEVEN HARRIS

Steven Harris has just released *Excavated Shoulder*, the second album under his Pyrrhic alias. Available on cassette, the album is another collection of darkwave electronics fans of his previous band NUN will be afamilair with.

I frst met Steve in Melbourne about ten years ago. Now he's living in Adelaide, but he left his cave just long enough to answer my questions and share some photos.

Some of the sounds on the new Pyrrhic album sound familiar. What gear did you use?
For the new tape I primarily focused on using the M.P.C. Electronics D.S.M (Drum Synthesizer Modules) x 3 for a lot of the percussion sounds, mostly the toms, cowbell tones, hats, percussive clicks and a couple of the kicks.

I used the Akai MPC for the sampled kicks and some other open and closed hats (and also for triggering the DSM). The synth sounds were mostly from the Roland SH-1, Korg Polysix, Korg MS-10, 20, Kawai K1M and Akai S5000. I used layers of prepared field/room recorded tapes for a lot of the tape room noise, which you can hear more prominently on this release.

They were all of random recordings I made with old Micro Cassette Dictaphones, which were then processed or re-recorded and fed through chorus/reverb and distortion pedals etc. I also used old audio book tapes for some of the words you hear intermittently as well as some shortwave radio.

How long were you working on the album, and how do you think it differs from the previous one?
I started working on this whilst waiting for the first album tapes to be duplicated, so probably a year all up in very sporadic bursts of activity, the beauty of DIY is no deadlines, so I just worked on it when the urge arose, and when I had time of course. I think there is a loose connection to the first, but over the course of the tracks it becomes further abstracted from point A. Which was deliberate and part of the process of un-learning structure.

Pictured Left: The bags Steven made to hold each tape. Right: His collection of tape recorders and effects.

The first tape was more structured, with some hints of freeform bleeding through occasionally. *Excavated Shoulder* takes off from this theme, trying to break further away from the typical verse/chorus structure and trying to be more organic. That's not to say it is free from structure though, it's an ongoing process.

Both of your Pyrrhic albums are on cassette. What do you like about the format?
The thing I like about it is the physical object and affordability, I would love to have a vinyl, but that's far too expensive for me as a solo artist. I needed to have something physical for it to exist, so I went with tape, which has a nice compact form and tells a story as an object.

Can you tell me about the packaging? How long did it take to put those together?
I wanted to move away from the more pre-packaged scenario of production, and have a more hands on approach. I've always been very DIY, and saw this as a perfect opportunity to create the object as well as the sounds too. I went with the muslin bags as I felt they complimented some of the organic sounds on the tape.

The image on the cover was something I made in a printmaking elective when I was completing the Sound Arts course at RMIT. I've always had that image around, and it just kind of suited this work. I originally was going to Riso print each image using a Print Gocco machine, but I couldn't get the image to burn on the screen, so I went with laser printer and iron on transfer sheets, which worked. Albeit with varying quality across all 50 copies which lends itself to the organic nature of the packaging and sounds. I printed up the labels, with a very soft ambiguous hue.

Then, I had the cards with the track listing printed via one of those business card places. The picture of the woods on the other side of the card is in the grounds of Cabra Castle, which I took when Debbie and I were visiting Ireland a couple of years back. I was going to use that as the front cover, but the overall design changed.

Pictured: Steven's collection of synths, drum machines, effects, and cables.

Can we expect some remixes or more releases from you soon?
Yes, there will always be a follow up. I've already started working on PYRR03, again, a further abstraction, probably more in the vein of the last couple of tracks of this one. I would like to work on one with very little percussive elements, if any, not sure if that will be part of this.

Is Pyrrhic your main project right now, or are you making other music too?
Yes, this is it for the moment; I was going to release this tape under a different name, but chose to stay with the same one for this. I may do this in the future, as I want to go down different paths.

Now that Australia is opening back up, will you be doing any live shows over the summer?
I don't have any plans to at this stage. These tracks were initially recorded with the intention of being able to perform them live. But I soon scrapped that idea / constriction and just focussed on creating. If I ever do, it will probably be a very different performance to these recordings, and more like one long extended semi-improvised excursion. I think I prefer recording rather than playing live, although in the past I always preferred playing in places that aren't typical venues.

Have you been listening to anything (old or new) that you'd recommend?
Currently I've been listening to Pye Corner Audio, Varg²™, AirSculpture, Mischa Pavlovski, Blacworld, Headless Horseman and I always go back to Heldon / Richard Pinhas, which is always one of my favourites. I've also been listening to lots of random old ambient tape releases and old anarcho peace punk stuff. •

Excavated Shoulder is out now on Bandcamp:
pyrrhic1.bandcamp.com

Between 1955-57 Transition Records released 15 albums, including early records with Sun Ra, John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, and Donald Byrd. Each album had beautiful packaging, including booklets with information about the band, their songs, and Transition's future releases. The label was unsustainable and closed after two years, but its founder Tom Wilson continued to work within the industry and produced albums for Bob Dylan, The Velvet Underground, and Frank Zappa. It's these projects he is best known for now, but it started with Transition.

Born Thomas Blanchard Wilson Jr. on March 25, 1931 in Waco, Texas, Tom Wilson played trombone and attended jam sessions at his grandfather's laundry as his early music education. After completing high school in Texas, Wilson attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee for one year before transferring to Harvard in Boston. At Harvard, Wilson studied economics while still finding time to follow his music pursuits, starting the Harvard New Jazz Society in 1953.

"I was president of the jazz society there, and began to meet some of the musicians," Wilson told *Melody Maker* in 1967. "We sponsored one of Dave Brubeck's earliest concerts, I did interviews with Charlie Parker and others, and we recorded Herb Pomeroy, Serge Chaloff and some more. We started to can programmes, and that's where I learned radio and recording techniques."

Back in 1953, Wilson explained his plans for the Jazz Society were to foster appreciation for jazz music at Harvard, focusing attention on "all that's good in jazz, not only bop or progressive." Alongside running a series of lectures on jazz history, Wilson also worked at the college radio station WHRB as pop music director.

After graduating in 1954, Wilson borrowed what has been reported as either $500 or $900, which he used to start Transition Records, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The new company was officially founded March 1955 as Transition Tapes, Inc., with Wilson joined by fellow Harvard alumni, Wells Whitney as treasurer and Steven Greysner as business manager.

Perhaps as explanation for the labels long name, Wilson told *The Harvard Crimson* at the time, "Although we will concentrate on producing LP records during the next 18 months, most of our music will thereafter be issued on tapes".

"We plan to specialize in folk songs, jazz, and American classical music…One of our main objectives is to record neglected American compositions which we feel deserve recognition."

Transition's first release was *Jazz In A Stable*, released November 1, 1955. Led by trumpetist Herb Pomeroy, the album was recorded with the house band at Boston's music club The Stable and was praised by jazz magazine *Down Beat* upon its release, who wrote "the musicianship is of a very high level. Pomeroy indicates again that he is one of the best young trumpeters in the country…Collectively, the unit swings and has good ensemble integration…The set is thoroughly recommended."

The album was Pomeroy's solo debut, and Transition released several more debuts in it's first year. This included *Sam Gary Sings*, which remains blues-folk singer Sam Gary's only solo album. Gary had been singing with Josh White for several years and was part of his Carolinians group who released the album *Chain Gang* in 1940. He also sang with Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, and appeared on Josh White's solo debut *Josh At Midnight* (1956).

The booklet which accompanied *Sam Gary Sings* revealed a second album from Sam Gary was planned, titled G*ary Sings The Gospel*. This would have been part of a series of folk albums which *Sam Gary Sings* was the first. Albums by Odetta, Sonny Terry, Jo Mapes, Dean Laurence, Pete Stein, and Raphael Boguslav were also teased for the series, but while several were given catalogue numbers, no further folk albums appeared on Transition.

Perhaps one of the reasons the folk series ended prematurely can be attributed to a quote from Wilson, when he spoke to *Melody Maker* in 1976. He explained he didn't even like folk music,

Pictured: Tom Wilson bottom left, with The Harvard New Jazz Society (c1954)

Pictured L-R: Jazz In A Stable (1955), Sam Gary Sings (1956), Lovelady (1965)

telling them, "I'd been recording Sun Ra and Coltrane, and I thought folk music was for the dumb guys." He would later change his mind after hearing Bob Dylan, who he recorded with beginning in 1964.

Before Transition become focused strictly on jazz, in their first year an album by Lovey Powell was released as part of a new "mood" series. But like Sam Gary's folk album, this would be the only release in its respective series, and a planned classical series was also put on hold, with only one album eventually releasing later in 1957.

In the label's second year, Transition released five albums, with each received strong reviews, earning the new label many fans. But Transition wasn't without criticism, and *Down Beat* took them to task over poor audio quality on several of their early releases, noting they didn't compare well to the expected hi-fi standard set by Blue Note.

These early Transition albums were recorded in what the label called "Live Concert Fidelity", which they explained as follows:

"We at Transition believe that the best jazz results from an optimum combination of musicianly skills and enthusiastic audience response. Each recording is made under the most authentic conditions: in the jazz club, at jazz concerts, or in the studio with a live audience in attendance. Few retakes are made, even at studio sessions, in order to preserve the freshness and spontaneity of the jazz improvisations"

Down Beat was unmoved, and in their review of John Windhurst's *Jazz At Columbus Ave.* (1956) they wrote, "It's about time Transition did something about its engineering…In today's market there is no excuse for this kind of production sloppiness…with an over-all thinness of sound, insufficient presence for trumpeter Windhurst, and a rhythm section that sounds, to borrow a phrase from General Mike Levin, as if it had been recorded on fudge."

Audio quality aside, Tom Wilson and Transition recorded several important debuts, including Sun Ra. Recorded in Chicago in July 1956, Transition released *Jazz by Sun Ra, Vol. 1* in 1957, and a Swedish pressing was released by Sonet as Tom Wilson expanded internationally.

In November 1956 Transition announced several deals for their albums to be released around the world. These included further releases on Sonet, including three songs from Donald Byrd's *Byrd's Eye View* released across two singles, with the 12 minute *Doug's Blues* split across two sides. But

more importantly, the deal also announced albums from Esquire Records in the UK and Vogue in France would be released on Transition.

Esquire releases by Scottish saxophonist Tommy Whittle, English multi-instrumentalist Victor Feldman, and the Keith Christie Quartet were announced for Transition. As was an album from Vogue featuring American saxophonist Lucky Thompson. Although the Esquire albums remained unreleased, Thompson's *Lucky Strikes!* was released by Transition in 1957, and later some of Transition's albums by Sam Gary, Herb Pomeroy, and Donald Byrd appeared on Esquire in the UK.

But for everything Transition did release, it seems there was always more which remained unreleased.

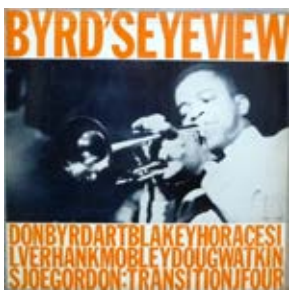
Tom Wilson recorded an early session by Pepper Adams featuring John Coltrane in 1955, with one song *Train's Strain* appearing on *Jazz in Transition*, a 1956 compilation of offcuts from the label's artists to date. Unfortunately, the song is said to have been so poorly reviewed a planned album was scrapped, and these sessions weren't heard for almost 20 years. Thankafully, they were eventually released on *High Step* (1975), a collaborative album from Paul Chambers and John Coltrane released on Blue Note, and were also added to Blue Note's later reissues of *Chambers' Music: A Jazz Delegation From The East*.

Blue Note would also release a February 1957 session by Louis Smith featuring Julian "Cannonball" Adderley which had been intended for Transition. It was released in 1958 as *Here Comes Louis Smith*.

The reason these sessions found a new home was because Transition closed in 1957. The label had announced plans to release an album by singer Sheila Jordan at the end of 1956, and even announced Joe Gordon had signed with them in May 1957, but nothing from these planned sessions was ever released.

Other unreleased session included albums by Jay Migliori, Yusef Lateef, and Dave Coleman, some of which may not have been recorded. A Charles Mingus live recording from his appearance at Newport, Rhode Island in 1955 was also said to be planned for release by Transition, but wasn't secured, and remains unreleased.

While sales were never great, the label was recognised as having one of the best jazz catalogues of the time, and when Transition closed in 1957 Blue Note Records picked up most of their catalogue, including the aforementioned Louis Smith debut.



Pictured L-R: Byrd's Eye View (1956), Byrd Jazz (1956), and Byrd Blows On Beacon Hill (1957).

Later in 1961, Delmark announced they had acquired and planned to reissue the Transition masters of Sun Ra, Johnny Windhurst, Donald Byrd and Yusef Lateef. Delmark reissued the Byrd-Lateef sessions as *Yusef* in 1965, and reissued Sun Ra's debut as *Sun Song* in 1967. The label also released Sun Ra's *Sound of Joy* in 1968, which had also originally been recorded for Transition in December 1956, as the follow up to his debut.

Following the closure of Transition, Tom Wilson spent the next several years hopping between record labels, where he worked with jazz, folk, and pop acts.

In 1958 Wilson joined United Artists as part of the A&R staff in charge of producing jazz albums. Then in 1960 he left to manage a new all-jazz operation on WNCN-FM in New York. Wilson also produced a weekly half-hour radio programme for the station, but left later that year and joined Savoy Records where he recorded another Sun Ra album.

In 1962 he moved to Audio Fidelity Recordings, where he announced plans for a radical development of stereo music, and founded their Dauntless sublabel. One of the interesting releases Wilson took part in was *Stereo Spectacular Demonstration & Sound Effects* (1962). The album features a script written by Wilson, and includes stereo demonstrations of sound effects sweeping across the left and right speakers. In one demonstration two men play Russian roulette, passing a pistol back and forth until one loses. It manages to end on a humorous note all the same.

Wilson then moved to Columbia in 1963 where he famously recorded Bob Dylan and helped him go electric, before he joined MGM in 1965. It was here he produced the first two Velvet Underground albums, and also began hosting a new hour-long radio show called *Music Factory*. Sponsored by MGM, *Music Factory* was a promotional tool for the label where Wilson would interview MGM artists and play their music. But he also played Herbie Hancock and Bob Dylan records, including *Like A Rolling Stone*, which he had produced.

Pictured: Tom Wilson recording Music Factory (1967)

Wilson hosted 25 of the episodes, which premiered on WABC-FM in New York, and were also aired on over 100 college stations. Photos exist of Nico visiting the Music Factory studio on June 21, 1967, where she is said to be promoting her debut album *Chelsea Girl*, which Wilson produced. But while the photo did appear in *Billboard*, the episode doesn't appear among the others which have been collected by fans.

In 1967 Tom Wilson moved again and resigned from his A&R position at MGM to form Rasputin Productions, which produced records independently for ABC Records and MGM. Wilson then formed the Tom Wilson Organization in 1968, a talent agency and recording office. In an extended feature on Tom Wilson for *The New York Times Magazine*'s September 29, 1968 issue, Wilson explained his motivations.

"You know why I went independent? Because I got tired of making millions of dollars for a millionaire who didn't even send me a Christmas card...[I work hard] so that I can sit back in my old age in my stuffed leather chair".

During the 1970s Wilson produced albums for several different labels, but the artists he worked with had become less high-profile. Instead, he focused on up-and-coming young acts who he hoped would be the next big thing, like The Fraternity of Man, and The Bagatelle. Neither were particularly successful, but he did have some success with Gil Scott-Heron.

It's Your World, a 1976 album from Gil Scott-Heron & Brian Jackson was produced by Wilson and reach #168 in the Billboard Top 200. It wasn't as high an achievement as some of the albums Wilson produced during the 1960s, nor was it as good as Scott-Heron & Jackson's *The First Minute Of A New Day* which reached #30 in 1975. But it was still an album that people would appreciate and remember.

The duo's follow up *Bridges* released in 1977 and was co-produced by Wilson. It reached #130 in the Billboard Top 200 and became one of the final albums Tom Wilson worked on as he died from a heart attack on September 6, 1978.

At the time he had been developing an opera *Mind Flyers Of Gondwana* which he hoped would star Gil Scott-Heron, Gladys Knight, and The Righteous Brothers, with music by Bob Marley. It remains unproduced.

Although Transition was only short lived, Tom Wilson and his label have continued to gain fans. Working with so many successful artists from jazz, rock, and pop, means his work is always being rediscovered, and much of the Transition catalogue has been reissued by Blue Note.

Currently, Tom Wilson is the subject of a documentary film and biopic, both due for release in 2022. The documentary is directed by Marshall Crenshaw and was due some time ago, but has been delayed due to the ongoing pandemic. The biopic was only announced in 2021 with Wilson's son, Tom Wilson III, producing. Neither have set definite release dates, but for those interested you'll be sure to hear more about Tom Wilson soon. •

New Zealand's Lathe Record Cutting Master

Lathe record pressing is a process of cutting a record in real time on polycarbonate discs, as apposed to vinyl which is pressed using stampers. The lathe process is slow, but has gained a cult following, with one of the most famous in the field being Peter King.

Peter began his lathe career in the 80s after he purchased two lathe cutters and thanks to his background in music and engineering, Peter began to master the lathe technique. But it wasn't easy at the start, as he once revealed:

"The equipment was English and it was all in pieces. So I thought, let's have a go, and I slowly put it all back together again. Trial and error for the first two years…I didn't realise the cutting arm was should have a weight on it until I found it one day at the bottom of a box. The records I had been making until then sounded like someone scratching barbed wire up a flagpole."

After experimenting with different plastics, Peter eventually settled on the clear polycarbonate which become the trademark look for his King Records Worldwide. By then, vinyl pressing plants had closed down in New Zealand and CDs became were default music format, so Peter secured a niche for producing lathe records.

Of the many records Peter has cut, possibly the most famous would be the *Aglio E Olio EP*, a collection of punk songs released by American rap trio Beastie Boys in 1995. While the rest of the world got CDs and black vinyl editions, in Australia the EP was available on a double clear 7" lathe cut by Peter King, a release which is credited for increasing his profile.

As more international orders began to arrive, these were cut in a variety of different shapes and sizes, including 6", 7", 8", 9", 10" and 12" discs, and Peter further innovated with picture discs, and cutting directly onto CDs for a disc which could play on both a turntable or CD player.

Because lathe cut records are much cheaper to produce than vinyl, the format has been popular with independent artists and labels. Pressing on vinyl also often requires a minimum order of 500 records, while Peter was happy to do small runs of 20, allowing him to take on several smaller projects. This meant Peter's studio was always busy and in 2017, he told *RDView* he had pressed over 6 million records over 30 years, working 7 days a week, 14–18 hours per day.

Following some health issues, in 2017 Peter stopped taking orders and had to retire from lathe cutting. On a Facebook group where people discuss his work, occasionally a friend or family member will leave an update, and through them Peter has expressed hope he will return to making records one day.

Lathe records, although still a niche format, has maintained its popularity among independent artists, with new studios opening, and entire forums dedicated to the art of lathe cutting.

In 2019 Peter King and his fellow lathe cutters were celebrated in *A Short Run: A Selection of New Zealand Lathe-Cut Records*, an exhibition of their work held at New Zealand's Objectspace gallery. The exhibition has toured, and recently visited the Centre of Contemporary Art Toi Moroki in 2021, where demonstrations of lathe cutting were held by James Meharry and Johnny Electric.

While he remains in retirement for now, Peter King's work continues to be celebrated by record collectors around the world, as well as the bands he pressed records for. Speaking to *The Spinoff* in 2019, Stefan Neville summed up his experience with Peter King:

"Peter's service gave us a way to set up a tiny, hopeful little platform to present ourselves to the world. These timid, weedy, wonderful gestures that trickled out into the world and made life-enhancing friends and connections on our behalf. The relationships led to tours and gigs and 'real' pressed records and a sense of meaningful self-worth. It's a bit magical and mysterious and ridiculously easy." •

For more information, see Peter King's website: peterkinglathecutrecords.co.nz

Pictured opposite page: Peter King in his studio (c2017)
Note: This article originally appeared on The Shadow Knows website, September 2021.

REVIEWS

SINGLES

Alba & The Mighty Lions - Matemática
Names You Can Trust
A bit of Latin soul in English and Spanish. Near the end there's a lovely bit where some synths do their best impression of a bird song, while the vocals become wordless. I think that was my favourite part, but the whole thing is fantastic, and luckily there's an instrumental version on the b-side so you can take in the full instrumentation of the track. It's brilliant.

Altar of Eden - Phantom Image
Sound Grotesca
As soon as you hear those drums you know this is going to be good! It's got that signature post-punk sound. Who knows what the vocals are saying, but I'm a sucker for those drums. *Loretta* is actually the lead song, and it's really cool with some great guitar, but Phantom Image is the one I have on repeat.

Fantasy 15 - Percy St.
Eraserhood Sound
This is actually the B-Side to *Burgundy Mist*, but while that track is fine, *Percy St.* keeps me coming back. It has one of those 60s spy movie bass lines mixed with a few synths and guitar and manages to be slick but dirty, precise but messy, at the same time. It's fun.

Indigo Sparke - Bad Dreams (Castle Demo)
Sacred Bones Records
Following her debut album *Echo*, Indigo Sparke released *Castle Demos*, featuring three demos from the album. *Bad Dreams* stood out thanks to its haunting instrumentation as a scratchy cello accompanies Indigo singing as though her voice might fail any at any moment. These are lofi and you can hear the tape hiss, but they sound amazing.

Lorn - Yo2 _ Rustlin
(self released)
Watch your speakers on that intro. This is the first new Lorn in about 12 months, and features hard crunchy production and punchy beats. Then, amongst all of this, there's what sounds like a harpsichord. At only 2 minutes long you'll be forced to explore Lorn's extensive back catalogue to get more.

The Resonaires - Standing With You
Colemine Records
The debut single from this soul band is beautiful. The tempo changes are really nice as the song builds up and pulls back with the chorus. Saundra Williams is the singer, who previously released similar sounding soul music with Saun & Starr.
The B-side here is a Neil Young cover and has grown on me thanks to the strong horn section.

Mabe Fratti - Que Me Hace Saber Esto
Tin Angel Records
Mixing synths, drones, and strings with a rhythm chugging along underneath like helicopters flying in the distance. Sounds jump in and out as layers are built up and pulled back, only to really come together in the final seconds. It's perplexing, but engaging too, and from the first time I heard it I've been thinking about it and trying to figure it out.

ALBUMS

DeRobert & The Half-Truths - 100 Yard Dash
G.E.D. Soul Records
If you like your soul to sound as though it's from the 70s, then this is the band for you. Across seven hot tracks, this Nashville group bring you some of their best, starting with an incredibly fast drum break. The mix sounds great as the sax and trumpet never overpower your ears, and DeRobert Adams' vocals sit comfortably amongst the band. At around 15 minutes in length, it does leave you wanting more. But that's the only negative here.

Hélène Vogelsinger - Reminiscence
Modularfield
Modular synth rhythms will draw you in throughout this album. The first track lasts ten minutes, and while the others are a tad shorter, I found myself losing track of time as the density of this music engulfed me. I had to take breaks. So much is going on in each track and I found it quite overwhelming, yet it was something I wanted to keep reexperiencing too. Maybe I need to just close my eyes and give myself over to this album. It's beautiful even if it might just drive me mad.

Kieran Mahon - Solstice (Live)
Airbag Records
One thirty-minute track, *Solstice* is an ambient drone piece built from repetitive synth rhythms which glide along. While repetition is often used to describe music in a negative light, here it's used to hypnotise the listener as the same patterns are used across different sounds, and your concentration drifts through the layers of sound which are constantly building.

Love Supreme - SUN
Animal63
An acoustic version of their 2019 self-titled album. This opens gently with an acoustic guitar and organ before a raspy voice sing along. I hadn't heard the original and I can't imagine how it would even sound. I haven't dared check it out as I really like these simple renditions with just an organ, guitar, and voice. The songs glide on at a fairly steady pace, and this will be nice to put on when all you want to do is unwind.

Mount Maxwell - The People's Forest
Hotham Sound Recordings
As soon as this started I couldn't help comparing it to Boards of Canada. It's got that cassette tape synth ambience to it. But after its eerie first track, *The People's Forest* mostly moves beyond comparisons and takes you on a journey of its own. As each track slides into the next, don't be fooled! This isn't relaxation music, and Mount Maxwell do their best to remind you by throwing in the occasionally jarring interruption.

Ty Segall - Harmonizer
Drag City
Closing in on 30 solo albums, this is Ty Segall's second release in 2021 following the cassette of his live stream in May, *Ty Segall Levitation Session*. *Harmonizer* opens with some amazing drum machines, and synth work but never fully commits to the sound. Some tracks work, but it doesn't take long before Ty goes back to his guitar roots. There's nothing wrong with mixing it up, but even some of the lyrics feel a bit slack here so it feels like a bit of a miss when compared to so much of his prior work.

Vivien Goldman - Next Is Now
Youth Sounds
You may have heard *Revolutionary*, Vivien's compilation album released in 2016. That was a collection of songs recorded in the 70s and 80s, but now she's returned with her first proper album. If you're a fan of the early stuff you'll probably enjoy this as Vivien sounds fairly similar here. Produced by Youth, the album is tagged as new wave, punk, and dub, but has an experimental pop sound throughout. Vivien sings in a high register which occasionally grates, but overall it works. Hopefully there's more to come.

Xhosa Cole Quartet - K(no)w Them, K(no)w Us
Stoney Lane Records
Cole leads on sax but allows the rest of his band to fill the first minute of this album before he bursts in with trumpeter Jay Phelps. This is an album of cover versions, so you may know some of these. Starting with Woody Shaw, there's some Ella Fitzgerald, Ornette Coleman, Lee Morgan and Thelonious Monk, and the quartet are joined by piano for three of those tracks. You almost don't hear the bass underneath the rest as the sax and trumpet go to battle and drums are pounded and cymbals crash, but the occasional solo allows the bass to shine, and us to catch our breath.

BOOKS

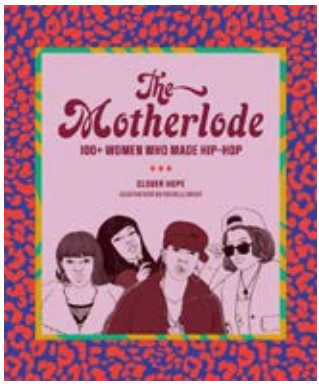
Relax Baby Be Cool: The Artistry and Audacity Of Serge Gainsbourg
by Jeremy Allen
Jawbone Press, 304 pages

An overview of Serge Gainsbourg's career, *Relax Baby Be Cool* features new interviews with those who worked with and knew Gainsbourg, as well as some fans who found him later.

Although I did enjoy this, there are occasional head scratchers, with the author going off on tangents which lost my interest. There's also a whole section which does its best to convince you that Gainsbourg and Picasso were similar, which seemed to be mostly based on the fact they both dated women younger than themselves.

But in each chapter I found new things I hadn't known, such as that Gainsbourg was meant to do the soundtrack for Truffaut's *Jules & Jim*, but it fell through, and a sequel to the fantastic musical *Anna* was written but left unproduced.

This is an enjoyable read for newcomers and diehards alike. With a great mix of anecdotes and fun facts, this is an often well written biography of Gainsbourg as man and musician.



The Motherlode: 100+ Women Who Made Hip-Hop
by Clover Hope. Illustrations by Rachelle Baker
Harry N. Abrams, 272 pages

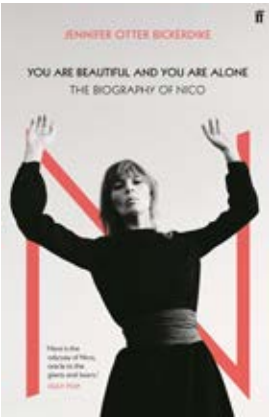
In its introduction, the author explains how women have been made to feel unwelcome in rap and hip hop due to being termed 'female rappers'. Male rappers were just rappers, but women were classed as being different, and reminded they were rappers within a "male-dominated" field.

The Motherlode is here to show you that women have been rapping since the beginning, and that they can stand on their own. 100 artists are profiled, with some getting several pages and others a brief mention. This is mainly American rappers too, with only a few international acts included.

Each entry on an artist doesn't just focus on them, but will sometimes act as a jump off point to discuss other topics. Occasionally it works when it adds context, and other times it goes a bit too far away from its subject. Listening suggestions are also given, and that alone will make this a book worth coming back to for a long time.

Of course, not everyone is covered here. But for those who are included, the author treats them with respect and presents each artist without judgement. Differing opinions on the idea of being classed as 'female rappers', or whether someone is rap or pop, are each brought up alongside how artists are marketed and treated within hip hop overall.

The illustrations by Rachelle Baker make this book stand out, and for the hip hop fan The Motherlode is a must read, as the topic hasn't been covered at length since *Vibe Magazines's Hip Hop Divas* book from 2001.



You Are Beautiful and You Are Alone: The Biography of Nico
by Jennifer Otter Bickerdike
Faber Faber, 512 pages

I found this a frustrating read. Overall, it's informative but is focused more on how Nico was viewed by those close to her rather than looking too deeply at her critical reception. The author makes several valid critisisms of how Nico has been perceived by others. But while the author criticises people's obsession over Nico's looks, they bring up the subject repeatedly too.

Often this is through the many people who are quoted or interviewed, with each repeating similar descriptions of Nico: she was quiet/moody, and was beautiful once but let herself go after getting on heroin. We read this again and again, as seemingly every single person in Nico's life gets pages to detail the exact same thing as everyone else. It's tiring.

Perhaps the most shocking section is on Nico's relationship with Jim Morrison. After the author makes a point of criticising the press on how Nico has often been judged by her sex appeal and the men she slept with, there's a section with pages of people describing Nico and Jim Morrison's sex life in graphic detail.

Those criticisms aside, I did enjoy the parts about Nico in the studio and on tour. Some of her past band members have great anecdotes of their time together, and there are some happy moments in between what was often a tragic life.

The book ends with the death of Nico, and while an epilogue attempts to show how Nico continues to be disrespected by certain groups, it would have been interesting to read how new fans have discovered her and been influenced. After reading the negative critical response to her work throughout this book, it would have been interesting to know whether this has changed or not. •

Outro.....

Well that's it for now. We'll be back mid-2022 with issue three after a bit of rest.

A special thanks goes out to everyone who helped bring this all together. Thank you to everyone who agreed to be interviewed of course, and shout out to Alain Bizos for letting me use some of his amazing photography. Thanks also to Dave who runs @thedjshadowcollection on Instagram for sharing the Blackalicious album scan.

Make sure to check our website for extra content that will supplement this issue too. There's always a few things that either wouldn't fit, or just didn't come in before deadline.

We'll also make sure to post some roundups of our favourite songs and albums by some of the artists mentioned this issue, and we've been posting mixes on Mixcloud, so check our website for those too.

As always, if there's something you think we should feature next time, something we missed, or you just have a general comment or thought, please send it through. We appreciate it. You can contact us via email or or DM us on Instagram.

Until next time,
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The Shadow Knows was produced in Melbourne, Australia, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people.

We would like to pay respect to those elders past and present whose lands we meet on, and acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners of this land.